Hi. I was on vacation. But I'm back! Let's see, where were we...

Originally, being a nerd was associated with people who worked with computers. Even today, computers and electronics are considered “nerdy” interests. Really, though, it’s evolved to mean someone who is enthusiastic about any one thing.

"...nerds...are allowed to be unironically enthusiastic about stuff... Nerds are allowed to love stuff, like jump-up-and-down-in-the-chair-can’t-control-yourself love it...when people call people nerds, mostly what they’re saying is ‘you like stuff.’ Which is just not a good insult at all. Like, ‘you are too enthusiastic about the miracle of human consciousness.’" (Green)

So, if it isn’t computers or glasses that define nerds, what is it? It may be their introversion, and the resulting lack of empathy. Not only do nerds "seek...to avoid physical and emotional confrontation", they may not even understand it. Author Benjamin Nugent invites us to think about Victor Frankenstein, a classic example, and what makes him “an ur-nerd”.

"The young scientist...betrays a combination of rational thinking and technical prowess coupled with a childlike inability to fully grasp that other people are just as needy, ambitious, and sensitive as himself- as Harold Bloom once put it, Frankenstein is ‘a being who has never achieved a full sense of another’s existence.’ That’s what enables him to make the monster and fail to think, How would I like it if I had skin that barely held together, was eight feet tall, and had yellow eyes and black lips, so that people were inclined to run from me in terror? How would I like it if I had no family? His failure is a failure to emotionally confront another person, a failure of empathy. In a stupid person, this lack of empathy might not matter, but in a modern man with a godlike capacity for making things, it can create disasters. The root of evil in Frankenstein is the mingling of scientific brilliance with a deficit of emotional connectedness."

The term “nerd” is a little bit blurry in derivation. Urban legend states that the term originated on college campuses, and was spelt “knurd”. A “knurd” was a diligent student, the opposite of a “drunk”. There is no validation for this theory. According to The Online Etymology Dictionary, it is “...U.S. student slang, probably an alteration of 1940s slang nert “stupid or crazy person,” itself an alteration of nut. The word turns up in a Dr. Seuss book from 1950 (“If I Ran the Zoo”), which may have contributed to its rise.” The term is still used to describe a nutty or eccentric person, but is more likely someone who is intelligent to the point that they are seen as something “different”. That will be the working definition for this paper. But this is still a little vague, so let’s expand it.

"...some people, especially young people, adopt a broad definition and define a nerd as anyone who wears glasses...glasses must be some kind of badge of nerdity," says psychologist David Anderegg. Being a nerd really has nothing to do with suspenders, glasses, and pocket protectors. What it comes down to is the way they interact with the world. Nerds...tend to remind people of machines by

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**Quote of the Day**

*I have learned that to be with those I like is enough." -Walt Whitman

**July 2011**

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**The journey continues...**

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1. Being passionate about some technically sophisticated activity...
2. Speaking in language unusually similar to written Standard English.
3. Seeking to avoid physical and emotional confrontation.
4. Favoring logic and rational communication over nonverbal, nonrational forms of communication or thoughts that don’t involve reason.
5. Working with, playing with, and enjoying machines more than most people do.

...They get stuck with the name “nerd” because their outward behavior can make them seem less than, and more than, human.” (Nugent)

In the past, they were seen as “unkempt eccentrics”.

“...Now they actually mean something along the lines of ‘expert’, ‘clever’, you know a little bit staying up late at night drinking black coffee, ‘keyboard monkey’, but nevertheless they’ve got respect. To say you’re a computer nerd now, people think oh that’s someone who can do something for me. ... It sort of now means highly computer literate and quite well respected. I think some people would be proud to be called a nerd...” (Leyton via Hunter)

They are “often regarded as poor communicators, introverted, and inferior team players, although a number of positive attributes such as intelligence, diligence, good organizational skills, and patience offset these rather negative qualities.” (Krawe)
In the words of young adult writer John Green, “...on some fundamental level we find it difficult to understand that other people are human beings in the same way that we are... We idealize them as gods or dismiss them as animals.” A key part of this misunderstanding is the use of stereotypes. Stereotypes are a large part of our perceptions of others. We look at their hair, face, and clothing, and then slip them into a predetermined category. It is mankind’s way of dealing with the unknown. One of the main stereotypes in today’s society is “nerd”. But when you break this stereotype down, it becomes apparent that this label is simply a way of explaining those that we cannot understand. A nerd is simply someone who views the world through wonder-filled eyes.

As a self-proclaimed nerd, I found this idea of stereotypes fascinating. I wrote an entire paper on the topic, in fact. It’s quote-laden, of course. So I decided to share that paper with you piece by piece this week. It’s fairly short, and I’d like input. How do you view nerds?

Oh! And I’ll do a separate “Works Cited” post at the end for those of you who want to know my sources.

Filed under Writing and tagged Geek, John Green, Nerd, Stereotype | Leave a comment

I enjoy the poetry of Christina Rossetti, possibly because it reminds me of my own or what I aspire to anyways. I like to think that we would have been friends if we had lived during the same era.

I do think that it’s rather tragic that most people only know her “Goblin Market” poem. I mean, it’s a very well-written poem, but I don’t think it’s anywhere close to her best work.

She was a terrifically witty person who liked to tease, laugh, smile, and flirt. Her work expresses her vivaciousness. But it also shows her seriousness and her understanding of the complications of life and romance.

So, the whole point of this post is for me to share some of my favorite quotes from this poet. Enjoy:

I tell my secret? No indeed, not I:
Perhaps some day, who knows?
But not today; it froze, and blows and snows,
And you’re too curious: fie!
You want to hear it? well:
Only, my secret’s mine, and I won’t tell.

from “Winter: My Secret”

I have no heart?–Perhaps I have not;
But then you’re mad to take offence
That I don’t give you what I have not got:
Use your own common sense.

from “No, Thank You, John”

You took my heart in your hand
With a friendly smile,
With a critical eye you scanned,
Then set it down,
And said: It is still unripe,
Better wait awhile;

from “Twice”

What would I give for a heart of flesh to warm me through,
Instead of this heart of stone ice-cold whatever I do;
Hard and cold and small, of all hearts the worst of all.

from “What Would I Give?”

Filed under About Me/ the blog, Writing and tagged Christina Rossetti, Literature, Poetry, Romance | Leave a comment

Alright, so I know that this speech was delivered in 1950, but I wasn’t alive then. As a writer, though, I can’t help but appreciate this speech by Faulkner. It’s inspiring, it’s heart felt, and it’s just as true today as it was 60 years ago.
"I feel that this award was not made to me as a man, but to my work—a life's work in the agony and sweat of the human spirit, not for glory and least of all for profit, but to create out of the materials of the human spirit something which did not exist before. So this award is only mine in trust. It will not be difficult to find a dedication for the money part of it commensurate with the purpose and significance of its origin. But I would like to do the same with the acclaim too, by using this moment as a pinnacle from which I might be listened to by the young men and women already dedicated to the same anguish and travail, among whom is already that one who will some day stand where I am standing.

Our tragedy today is a general and universal physical fear so long sustained by now that we can even bear it. There are no longer problems of the spirit. There is only one question: When will I be blown up? Because of this, the young man or woman writing today has forgotten the problems of the human heart in conflict with itself which alone can make good writing because only that is worth writing about, worth the agony and the sweat. He must learn them again. He must teach himself that the basest of all things is to be afraid; and, teaching himself that, forget it forever, leaving no room in his workshop for anything but the old verities and truths of the heart, the universal truths lacking which any story is ephemeral and doomed—love and honor and pity and pride and compassion and sacrifice. Until he does so, he labors under a curse. He writes not of love but of lust, of defeats in which nobody loses anything of value, and victories without hope and worst of all, without pity or compassion. His griefs grieve on no universal bones, leaving no scars. He writes not of the heart but of the glands.

Until he learns these things, he will write as though he stood among and watched the end of man. I decline to accept the end of man. It is easy enough to say that man is immortal because he will endure: that when the last ding-dong of doom has clanged and faded from the last worthless rock hanging hideous in the last red and dying evening, that even then there will still be one more sound: that of his puny inexhaustible voice, still talking. I refuse to accept this. I believe that man will not merely endure: he will prevail. He is immortal, not because he alone among creatures has an inexhaustible voice, but because he has a soul, a spirit capable of compassion and sacrifice and endurance. The poet's, the writer's, duty is to write about these things. It is his privilege to help man endure by lifting his heart, by reminding him of the courage and honor and hope and pride and compassion and sacrifice which have been the glory of his past. The poet's voice need not merely be the record of man, it can be one of the props, the pillars to help him endure and prevail."

Filed under About Me/ the blog, Writing and tagged Compassion, Endurance, Faulkner, God, Pity, William Faulkner | Leave a comment
big or small, lies are lies.

“I don’t feel very much like Pooh today,” said Pooh. “There, there,” said Piglet. “I’ll bring you tea and honey until you do.”
someday, you will miss me.
Happy 4th of July! What a way to celebrate the liberties our forefathers fought for. We blow things up, eat to excess, and dress in red, white, and blue. So happy birthday, America. I'm sure the founding fathers are smiling down on us and our American way of life.

Now excuse me. I'm going to go eat my pie! 😋

Filed under About Me/ the blog | Leave a comment
We're at the start of something new- and I'm scared to death.

I'm no good at new beginnings.

I cling to the old.

But you just smile

And hold out your hand.

I pause

A moment and-

Jump.

Let me start this by saying I've only seen the first X-men movie and this one. I haven't even read the comics…yet! So, my review is based solely on my enjoyment of the film, not on how well it follows the comics or whatever.

I saw three films starring James McAvoy this weekend (of Becoming Jane, Narnia: LW and the W). The first was Gnomeo and Juliet, which I refuse to review. It was cute but soooo cliched it was almost painful. The next was Penelope, which could have been much better. I just felt like the story was rushed and never fleshed out. Then I saw X-Men First Class.

The story is simple. It's all about the origins of the mutants we all know and love (Professor X, Magneto, Mystique) and some that I at least was unfamiliar with (Banshee, Angel, etc.). The pacing is good, the plot is interesting, and the action is just what you'd expect from X-Men.

What I loved, being into psychology, was to see the relationships. I especially loved getting to learn more about the friendship/battle/bromance between Professor X and Magneto. However, as much as I understand the need for the plot to keep moving, I really wish that they could have spent more time on this relationship (maybe a spin-off? 😊).

Another interesting dynamic was Mystique. She seemed really needy. I mean, she's a hardcore chick who can hold her own in battle, but emotionally, she seemed like one of those girls who needs a man to assure her of her own self-worth. Jennifer Lawrence was good, but her performance did nothing to soothe my doubts about her role as Katniss in the upcoming Hunger Games movie.

Then there’s Moira MacTaggert. In the comics, she’s a geneticist. In the movie, she’s a CIA agent. Overall, she was ok. She was a necessary tool in the plot to bring the mutants together, but it seemed a bit contrived.

Can I talk about Prof. X/Magneto again? 😊 Both James McAvoy and Patrick Fassbender were stupendous. I loved the contrast they provide. X is all about control, serenity, and the greater good. Magneto is more about rare power, emotion, and self-preservation. I do like the fact that Magneto is shown for the complex character he is, although from the beginning we can see his villain tendencies.

Overall, it was a fun movie. It provided an entertaining ride without taking itself too seriously. I can say one thing. It certainly has me interested in exploring the X-Men galaxy.
Speaking theoretically, what do you do when something really good comes into your life and you don’t deserve it? For me, I appreciate it, enjoy it, but deep down inside, I just find myself wondering how I ended up with it. In fact, I almost feel guilty. This is probably because I like to earn things myself. I love getting presents of course. However, I think the things I’ve had to work for are the things I truly treasure. I like to know that I have a right to whatever I have.

The problem is, life doesn’t always work that way, for good or bad. Because life is unfair, good things sometimes end up in the hands of people who really don’t merit them. You and I will undoubtedly have good things fall into our lives that we had nothing to do with. The true test is our reaction.

I think this is where a lot of people have trouble with Christianity (by which I mean the belief that Jesus died as the ultimate sacrifice for all the terrible things we did, do, and ever will do). It’s unreasonable. It isn’t what we deserve. After all, if we are honest with ourselves, we know that our lives have been a whole lot of garbage. We’ve done things we shouldn’t have. We have things we regret. There’s no way that we can deserve or earn a free pass. It’s just given to us.

But I have to wonder what life would be like if we could let go of our self-reliance just a bit. We want to deserve things, and that’s great…for the most part. It’s just impossible to live life completely on our own. We can’t deserve everything we’re given. But we can appreciate the gift and live our lives to be worthy of it.

Sorry if it seems like I’m preaching. It’s just a series of thoughts in my head today.

Filed under About Me/ the blog and tagged God, Philosophy | Leave a comment